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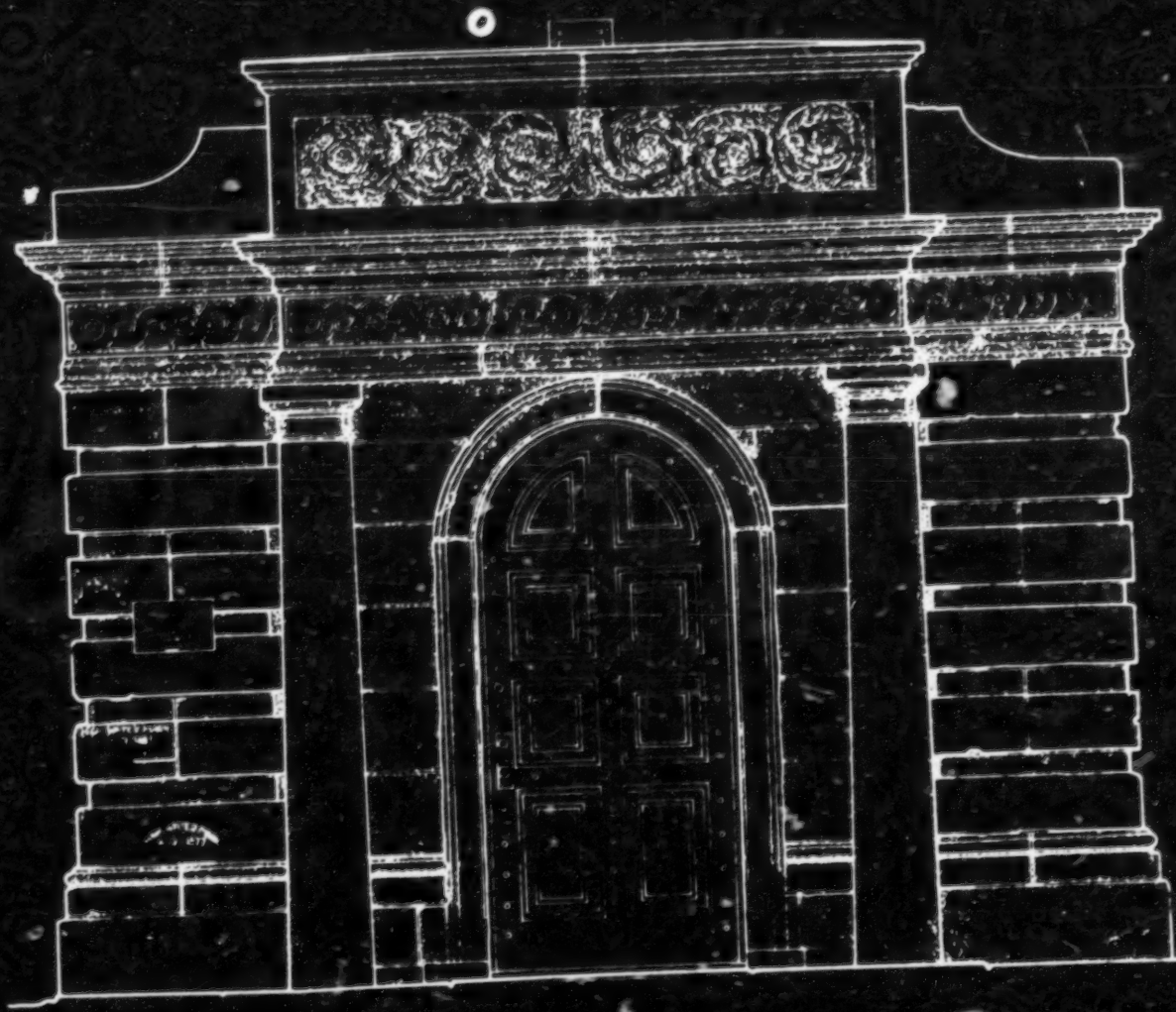
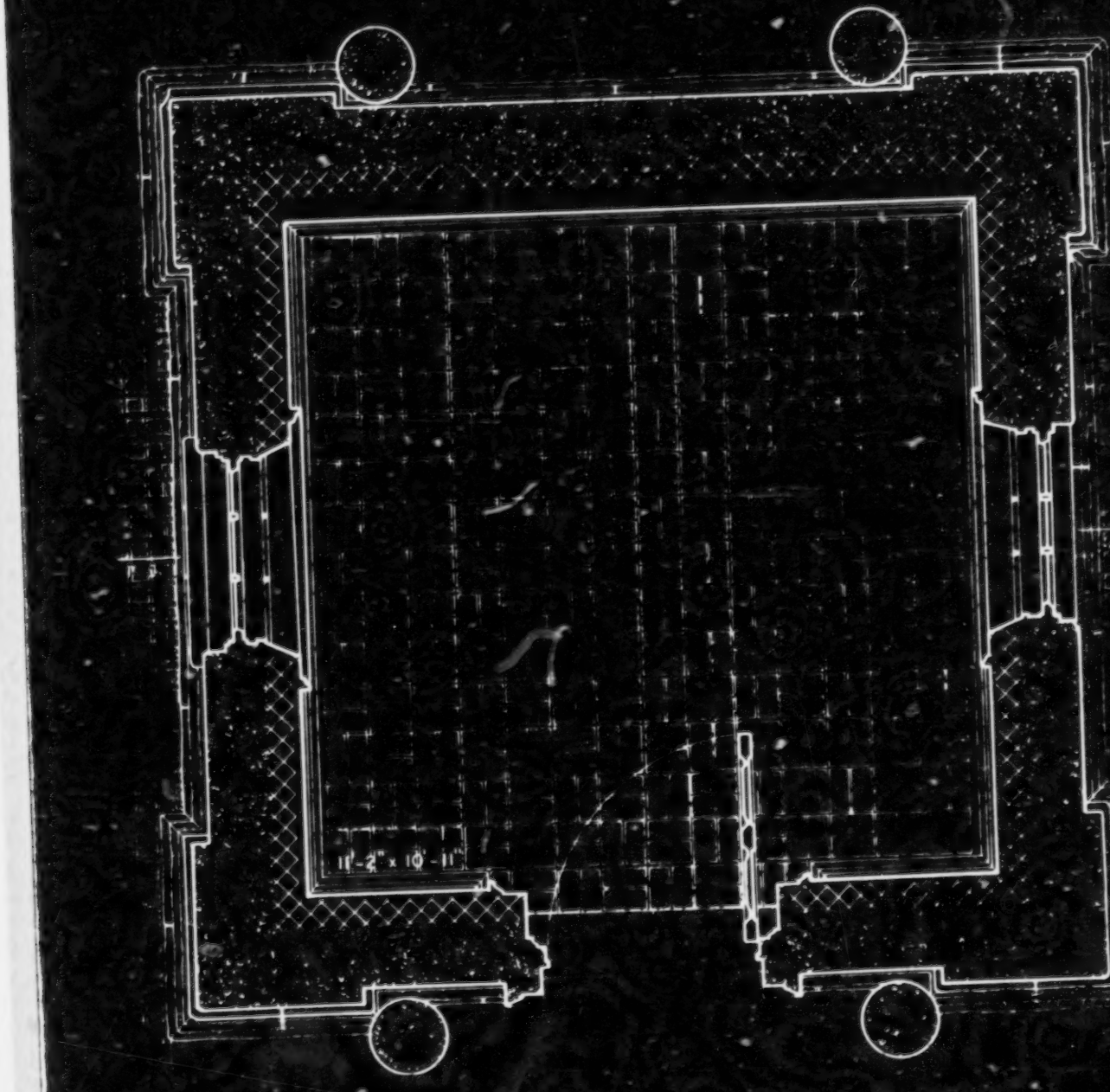
Historic American Buildings Survey





Bulfinch-U.S. Capitol Gatehouse, Washington, D.C., plan and elevation.

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DOCUMENTATION PROGRAMS

The bulk of records obtained by HABS is provided by its summer documentation teams, supervised by Washington, D.C., HABS staff. These three-month recording projects provide in-depth study of a specific building or a complex through measured drawings, large-format photographs, and written architectural and historical data. The HABS summer projects are supported by private donations from individuals or groups such as historical societies, by National Park Service funding, or funding from other governmental agencies. Recently, some documentation projects have extended over several summers, and some year-round recording efforts are underway.

Recording Projects

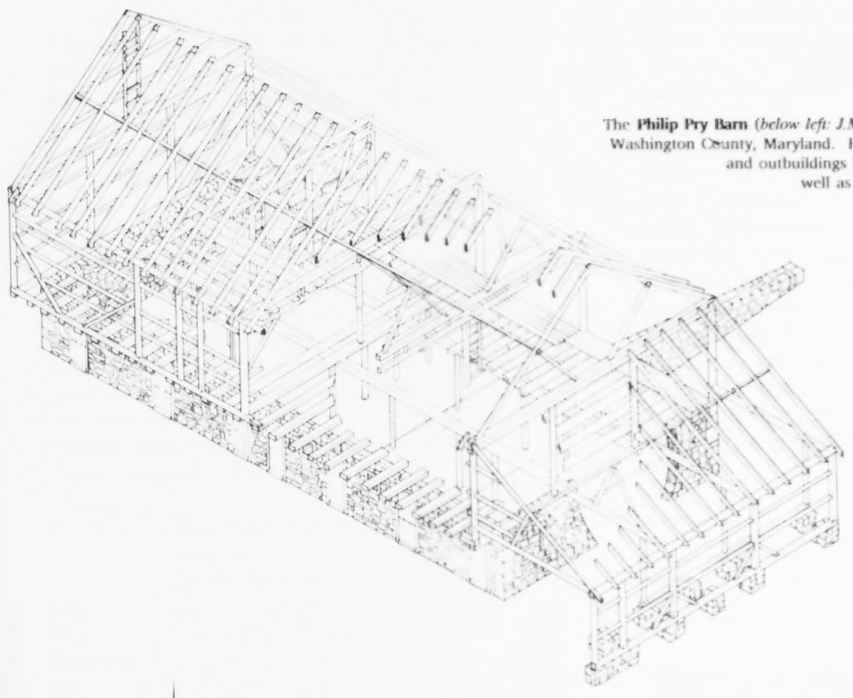
Recording projects are often utilized as the basis for restoration of an historic building, such as the 1981 documentation of Gunston Hall, a Virginia landmark built in 1755-59, noted for elaborate interior woodwork by William Buckland. Similar work was conducted for the White House of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia; the Asa Packer Mansion in Pennsylvania; and the Leland Stanford House in Sacramento, California. In addition to such individually important structures as these, HABS records the vernacular structures that collectively tell the story of generic American building and cultural history. These include adobe houses in the Southwest, small-town commercial buildings in Oklahoma, bungalows in California, and the standardized constructions of World War II temporary housing.

HABS has also undertaken landscape architectural and streetscape recording projects. Meridian Hill and Dumbarton Oaks parks in Washington, D.C., were recorded, for example, as models of formal and naturalistic gardens, respectively. In Honolulu, Hawaii, the turn-of-the-century commercial streetscapes of Nuuanu and Merchant streets were recorded to reflect a renewed interest in facade studies.

As part of its commitment to excellence, HABS regularly pursues documentation projects that benefit from state-of-the-art technology. At Canyon de Chelly National Monument in Arizona, the fragile historic and prehistoric structures were recorded as part of a pilot photogrammetry effort. Similarly, HABS documented the 1888 Texas State Capitol, the largest state capitol building, in part using a Computer-Aided Drafting and Design (CADD) system.

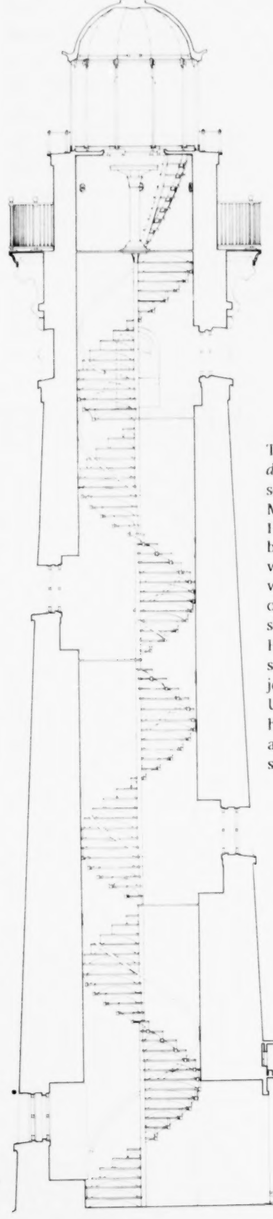
Inventory Projects

As part of full-scale summer team projects, HABS sometimes conducts architectural inventories. These serve to locate, identify, and evaluate buildings within a potential historic district or as part of a thematic study of a larger region. Inventories are often sponsored by Federal agencies that must fulfill their legally mandated requirement to identify properties within their jurisdiction that may qualify for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, such as the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York. As part of some recording projects, including Johnstown, Pennsylvania, inventoried structures have been entered into a database that identifies their significance, architectural features, and many other elements. Other recent projects with an inventory component include the multiyear recording of the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, a 100-mile-long belt that contains thousands of industrial, residential, and commercial structures. In 1988, a similar inventory was made of vernacular industrial housing in Pennsylvania coal towns such as Winber and Star Junction, as well as commercial and residential buildings in Alexandria and Saltsburg related to the Pennsylvania Canal.

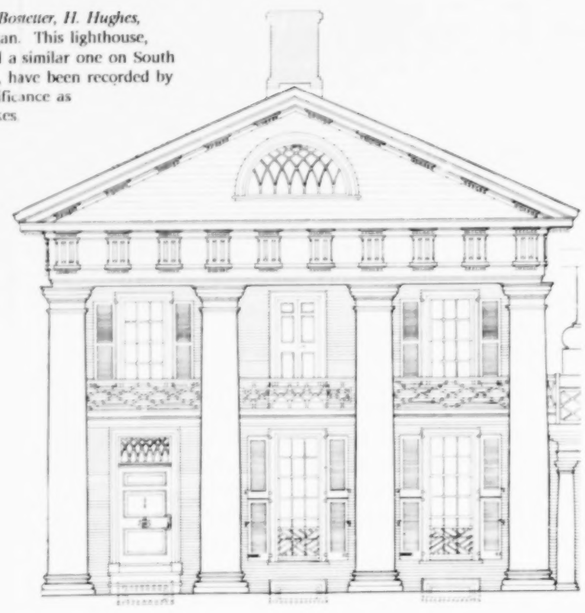


The **Philip Pry Barn** (*below left: J.M. Bloomer, A. Wenchel, delineators*) in Washington County, Maryland. HABS records structures such as barns and outbuildings for their individual structural merit as well as their role in rural farm compositions; this axonometric view reveals the barn's heavy timber framing.

Vernacular dwellings such as these **Cambria Iron Company Houses** (*below: by J. Lowe*) in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, were recorded as part of a multiyear documentation of nine southwestern Pennsylvania counties for the America's Industrial Heritage Project. The HABS/HAER work includes measured drawings; and written documentation that ranges from surveys of large collections of buildings to individual structures reports. These houses were erected by the major steel company for its workers in the neighborhood of Minersville, which HABS surveyed.



The **Au Sable Light Station** (*left: J. Boucher, H. Hughes, delineators*) in Alger County, Michigan. This lighthouse, seen here in a section drawing, and a similar one on South Manitou Island, Glen Arbor vicinity, have been recorded by HABS in recent years for their significance as beacons along Michigan's Great Lakes which during the 19th century witnessed the development of a thriving shipping industry. HAER has undertaken similar recording projects of operational U.S. lighthouses that highlight technical aspects of the structures.



Pavilion IV on the Lawn of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville (*above: H.J. Bradley III, delineator*). This elevation was among a set of measured drawings by UVA architecture students that won first place in the 1985 Peterson Prize competition. This HABS-sponsored award generates a large number of drawings that become part of the HABS collection at the Library of Congress. As a division of the National Park Service, HABS's focus is properties of national significance; in 1988 the University was named to the World Heritage List, the foremost acknowledgment for an historic site.

Meridian Hill Park (*below, by J. Boucher*), Washington, D.C. The Cascade fountain highlights this exemplary 12-acre, tiered garden, that was designed after formal Italian Renaissance models. It reflect HABS's growing attention toward documentation of historic architectural landscapes.

Mitigative Documentation

Under the provisions of the amended National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Federal agencies must produce mitigative documentation to HABS standards for buildings that are listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places, and are threatened with demolition or substantial alteration by Federal actions. At Fort McCoy in Wisconsin, the U.S. Army, in cooperation with HABS, complied with this directive in the recording of World War II temporary buildings that may be removed. Similarly, at the request of the local preservation agency, the 1887 Atlantic Building was delineated to mitigate its loss to new development; this downtown Washington, D.C., commercial edifice has a structure that represents the transition between bearing wall and high-rise skeletal methods.

DONATIONS

Although the HABS collection is almost entirely generated through HABS projects, measured drawings and photographs are sometimes donated by other sources, as was the Piaget-van Ravenswaay Collection, photographs of more than 600 historic buildings in Missouri taken from the 1930s to the 1960s. One of the largest outside sources of measured drawings comes from the annual Charles E. Peterson Prize, named for the founder of HABS. Established in 1982 with The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, the Peterson Prize offers monetary awards to the best sets of drawings produced by architecture students. More than a hundred structures have been recorded to HABS standards for this competition, including the 1680 Mulford House on Long Island, New York, the Eugene Mill and Elevator Company in Oregon, and portions of structures on the Lawn at the University of Virginia.

HABS SPONSORS

Past recording projects have been undertaken in cooperation with groups ranging from state historic preservation offices to local historical societies, chapters of the American Institute of Architects, and regional authorities, such as the America's Industrial Heritage Project. Within the framework of its congressional mandates, HABS focuses its documentation to ensure that the special interests of both the division and the sponsoring organization are accommodated. HABS welcomes inquiries regarding the cosponsoring of projects to record America's historic architecture.

HABS COLLECTION

HABS is one of the largest collections of architectural documentation in the world, composed of more than 45,000 measured drawings, 104,000 photographs, and 50,000 pages of written historical data. These records provide information on more than 21,000 buildings in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Panama Canal Zone, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. After being finalized in the HABS Washington office, all documentation is transmitted to the Library of Congress.

For further information about HABS and its collection and documentation program, contact:

Chief
Historic American Buildings Survey/
Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D. C. 20013-7127
202-343-9625

Cover image delineated by: *D. Winkert, K. Beckman, T. Buehner, S. Hall.*

Historic American Buildings Survey

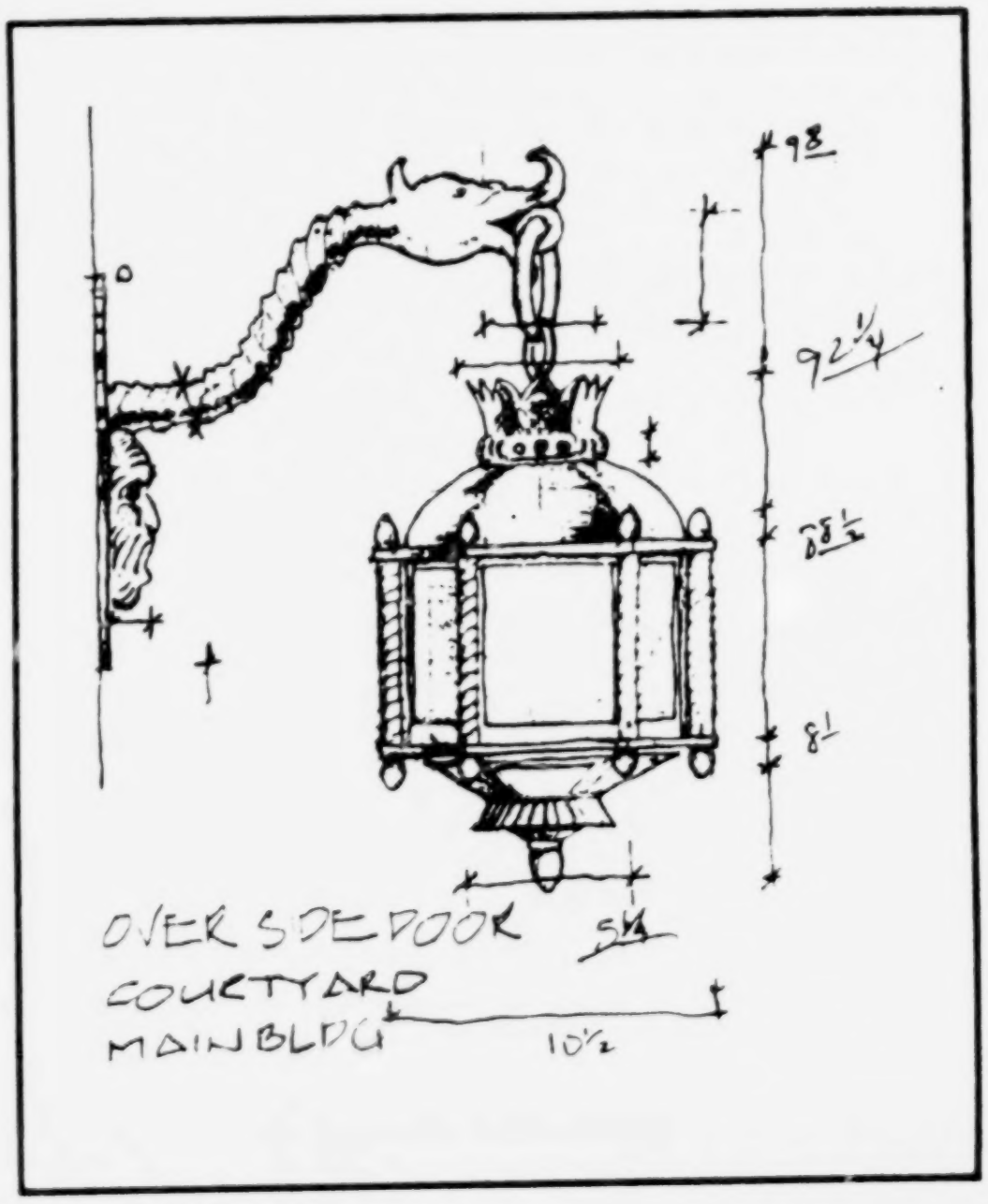
America's historic buildings are vigorous evidence of our cultural past. They reflect the resourcefulness of the earliest pioneers, the high-style tastes of more affluent generations, and the less formal vernacular constructions, as well as the technological advances that made possible the modern urban skylines of today. To understand what these buildings reveal of the past, and to place that knowledge in the perspective of architectural evolution, it is necessary to document these historic buildings comprehensively--those safely preserved as well as those threatened.

PRESERVATION THROUGH DOCUMENTATION

For more than fifty years, the Historic American Buildings Survey has led this approach of preservation through documentation. More familiarly known by its acronym, HABS was initiated in 1933 as a program within the National Park Service; it was the first major step by the Federal government to establish a comprehensive program to record America's historic buildings. HABS was also part of a nationwide effort to revive the country from the effects of an economic depression. The first HABS recorders were unemployed architects, draftsmen, and photographers. By the end of 1934, these men and women had produced more than 5,000 sheets of measured drawings and more than 3,000 photographs. HABS was an instant success; only one year after it had been inaugurated, steps were taken to make it a permanent recording program. In 1934 the National Park Service entered into an agreement with the Library of Congress and the American Institute of Architects as cosponsors of the HABS program. Under this agreement, the National Park Service administers the planning and operation of HABS with funds appropriated by Congress and supplemented by donations from individuals, foundations, historical organizations, state and local governments, and other Federal agencies. The National Park Service is responsible for setting qualitative standards, organizing and staffing the recording projects, and selecting subjects for documentation. HABS staff directs the preparation of records, edits them, and places them in the Library of Congress. The library preserves the records, makes them available for study, and supplies reproductions to the public upon request. The American Institute of Architects provides professional counsel through its national membership. In 1969, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) was established as a companion program to HABS to conduct documentation of structures representing technological and engineering significance.

Today, HABS is a program within the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record Division of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. As such, it is the oldest Federal program devoted to historic preservation. HABS summer teams have replaced the architects of the 1930s as the primary recorders. Since the 1950s, these teams have consisted of university students pursuing degrees in architecture, architectural history, landscape architecture, and related disciplines, who work under professional direction. Since 1984, HABS has cosponsored foreign interns through the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). The cooperative effort has brought architects and historians from

Scotty's Castle *(above, by J. Boucher)*, a Spanish-style villa and oasis in Death Valley, California, is one of the most remote sites ever documented by HABS. It features numerous exotic details, including patterned tile, woodwork, and light fixtures such as the one *(right)* sketched by architectural technician R. Bailey in his field notes.



member countries that include Great Britain, West Germany, Canada, Sweden, and Japan to work on summer recording projects. In addition to providing valuable HABS records, the fieldwork offers the next generation of architects and historians an opportunity to study our architectural past. As part of its mission to record America's historic buildings, HABS works closely with groups and institutions actively interested in preserving and recording their local and regional architectural resources. Priority is given to historic buildings administered by the National Park Service, to nationally significant structures including National Historic Landmarks, and to historic buildings that are threatened by demolition.

USE OF THE HABS COLLECTION

From its inception, the HABS collection has been open to the public. All HABS records--archivally safe with a shelf life of 500 years--are reproducible and copyright free. It continues to be one of the most widely used collections within the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress.

Many university libraries, historical societies, and state historic preservation offices have copies of the HABS materials. Additionally, in 1983 the Library of Congress published Historic America: Buildings, Structures, and Sites, a comprehensive checklist of the HABS and HAER projects accessioned into the collection up to January 1, 1982. The collections are also maintained on microfilm and microfiche at more than 100 other libraries throughout the United States.

The HABS collection is accessible to the public on weekdays in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress, Room 337, First Street and Independence Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. Reproductions of records may be ordered through the library's photoduplication service. Inquiries may be made to:

Division of Prints and Photographs
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C. 20540
202-707-6394

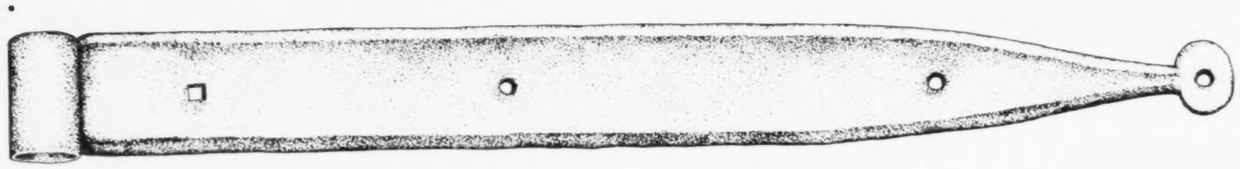
PUBLICATIONS

In 1989, HABS reissued its own guidelines, Recording Historic Structures. The revised textbook, which was first published in 1970 as Recording Historic Buildings, is widely used by preservationists, historians, and architects as the source for how to document structures, buildings, landscape architecture, and ships to the highest standards. Other organizations have produced state catalogs of HABS-documented structures for Alabama, California, Texas, Utah, and Virginia, among others, as well as municipal jurisdictions such as Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. The frequent use of the HABS large-format photograph collection in publications reflects both its magnitude and excellence. A Record in Detail (1986) features seventy-four large-format black and white images taken by HABS photographer Jack E. Boucher during his first twenty-five years with the program.

RELATED FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Other historic preservation programs within the National Park Service include HAER, the National Register of Historic Places, the National Historic Landmarks Program, and the Preservation Assistance Division. For further information about these, write directly to the specific program area at the following address:

National Park Service
P. O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127



Strap hinge: **Ike Cleaver Muskrat Shed**, New Castle County, Delaware (*G. Lanier, delineator*).

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